



A brighter future for children and young people in Darjeeling

As the new academic year begins, we are reflecting on a difficult summer in Darjeeling. Covid rates peaked in May but have since remained high in the town and surrounding villages, and elements of lockdown have continued through the summer months. Although shops are open, schools and colleges have remained closed; they hope to re-open in October or November as long as a third wave can be avoided. In senior schools, children were given funds to buy a device to help with learning at home, and some schools have continued to provide a lunchtime meal.

There are some signs of hope on the horizon: just in the last few weeks, some of the students we are supporting to gain hospitality qualifications at the Food Craft Institute have been able to take up their long-deferred industry placements, and a new batch of recruits are due to start their course later this month. Three new students are undertaking beautician training at a local salon. The newest rooms at the Kripasaran Mission children's home are also being fitted out, and recently received some new computer tables. We are keeping our fingers crossed that this opening up is the start of the recovery, and that our projects can recommence in earnest.



Beautician training at the salon

While the majority of adults in Darjeeling have now received both Covid vaccines, availability has still not reached everyone. NGOs have been stepping in to support the effort, and in June we were pleased to be able to donate money raised through a one-off fundraising campaign to help some of these organisations provide oxygen, vaccines and PPE supplies. We took this action separately to our usual remit, but we were pleased to facilitate these donations in response to a real desire among our supporters to help the people of Darjeeling. You can read about one of the projects we supported [here](#), and watch a short film about how the oxygen concentrators were used [here](#).



New computer desks in situ at the Kripasaran Children's Home

Closer to home, Tshering Huber, one of our own Trustees, set out on a mammoth cycle ride to raise money for water harvesting at the Kripasaran children's home. Tshering lives in Switzerland but grew up in Darjeeling. You can read about Tshering's intrepid journey [here](#).

In July we also ran our successful '10k for 10k' event, which saw individuals and groups get together to cover 10km in an attempt to raise £10,000 for water harvesting facilities at the KBM home. A huge thank you to everyone who took part. We were also delighted to receive a grant of over £3,000 from the United Nations Women's Guild, the second time they have chosen to support us.

These funds will allow us to provide water harvesting facilities at the KBM Children's Home. The extremes of monsoon weather in Darjeeling, combined with the hillside location and the lack of local infrastructure, mean that for part of the year water is a scarce resource in the town. Many people rely on deliveries of water from the plains, which are expensive and can be unreliable. Thanks to UNWG and our '10k for 10k' supporters, we will be able to install facilities to collect and store water during monsoon season, meaning the children can benefit from a reliable and free supply of water year-round.



Having fun for a good cause on the 10k challenge in July

In May we held an online 'thank you and celebration' concert, with live music from the wonderful Jiya Music. It was a fantastic chance to experience live music in the midst of lockdown, and a lovely opportunity to say thank you to our supporters. You can read more about the concert and find the link to watch it online [here](#).

And finally, we are hugely grateful to Allan Taylor, who not only ran the Jiya Music event for us but more recently has raised over £1,000 and broken two world records with his 'Broken Glass Challenge'. Not only did Allan spend a whopping 61.5 minutes standing on broken glass, he did so wearing 220 pairs

of handcuffs! You can read Allan's report of his amazing feat [here](#).

Thank you so much for your continued support for Darjeeling Children's Trust. We are hopeful that the next 12 months will bring greater freedom and opportunity back to the children and young people of Darjeeling. In the meantime, may you and your families stay safe and well.

Katie Carr
Chair, Darjeeling Children's Trust

Vital oxygen supplies for Covid patients

The world is going through challenging times. Earlier this year it was impossible to avoid the devastating images of the effects of COVID in India. When the new wave of the virus reached Darjeeling, our local trustee and supporters reached out to us for help.

We were not able to assist in an official capacity, emergency medical help isn't within our remit. However, there was a huge appetite among our trustees and supporters to help, so we organised an emergency appeal through the connections and friends we have in the town. Through a Zoom call with the Edwards Foundation, an NGO working in the town, we heard that oxygen supplies were in danger of running out and could only be replenished by travelling to Siliguri, a journey of about three to four hours by road, made even more difficult by the onset of the monsoon. We were asked for help in buying Oxygen Concentrators, which extract oxygen from the surrounding air and remove the need to buy supplies.

We put out the call for help, and within three days we had raised almost £14,000. The generosity of our supporters and friends has been overwhelming.

Of this, we donated £7,500 to the Edwards Foundation. This allowed them to buy 10 oxygen concentrators, which were used to help covid sufferers who could not afford admission to hospital. The Foundation made a short film about how the concentrators were used, which you can watch [here](#).



Oxygen concentrators are received and distributed in Darjeeling by the Vik-run Foundation and the Edwards Foundation.

The remainder of the funds were split between Trinity Foundation, the Vik-run Foundation and the Lali-Guras Foundation. Trinity is based in Siliguri and used the money to provide vaccinations, concentrators, and PPE to help the fight against Covid. The Vik-run Foundation is based in Darjeeling and were able to provide much needed safety equipment through their 'Project COVID support'. Our donation to the Lali Guras Foundation supported a free vaccine drive in Darjeeling, which vaccinated 800 tea plantation workers from Glenburn tea estate and surrounding villages in the last week of July.

This was all possible thanks to our world-wide supporters. Thank you to you all at such a difficult time. You have helped save many lives.

Biking for Water - by Tshering Huber

There is a biking route EuroVelo 6, which runs from The Black Sea to the Atlantic. In Switzerland it begins at Lake of Constance, follows the River Rhine and ends in Basle after a distance of 216 km. It's a very picturesque route through towns and villages, parks, vineyards and agricultural regions. My husband Andres and I cycled the distance on our tandem over a very leisurely 4 days in June.

On day 1, we picked up our tandem at Rorschach station and set off. After a cultural stop at The Saurer Museum in Arbon, dedicated to weaving machines which used to make the exquisite Swiss lace for haute couture houses, our first overnight stop was at Steckborn on Lake of Constance.

The next day we crossed the River Rhine and took a break at Stein am Rhein,

a picturesque medieval town. Once we were past Rheinfalls (at 150m wide nearly as wide as Niagara Falls!) we spent the night at Rafz.



Day 3 took us through pretty vineyards and agricultural views, until we reached our next stop at Laufenburg, where the Rhine marks the boundary between Germany and Switzerland.

On our final day the rain showers finally arrived, but after 216 km we were home. Our friends kindly sponsored our trip to raise money for water harvesting for the KBM children's home in Darjeeling. Thanks to their generosity we raised £4,000 as we explored Switzerland in a truly memorable way.

A thank you concert for the supporters of Darjeeling Children's Trust.

Friends, supporters and trustees from around the world gathered online in May for a concert of celebration and thanks. Between news about life in Darjeeling through a live link to India, and updates on the work of the Trust, we were treated to fantastic live music from Jiya Music. After so many months of lockdown it was wonderful to experience live music once again, and Jiya put on a fabulous show which blended Indian and Western styles. It was also uplifting to be able to connect with supporters from so many far-flung parts of the world thanks to the wonders of technology.



A huge thank you to Jiya Music for donating their time and great talent, to Allan Taylor for all his hard work in making sure all the communications worked seamlessly, and of course to our audience for supporting us and joining us on the day to the event a success. If you would like to watch the event it is available online [here](#).

The 'Broken Glass Challenge' - by Allan Taylor

By day I'm a Service Delivery Manager for an IT company, however outside of work I am a bit of a thrill seeker. I'm also the Chairman of the United Kingdom Escape Artists and love anything to do with Harry Houdini, Handcuffs and Padlocks.

I am also a member of my local Rotary club and we love to do things for charity, about 12 months ago I was introduced to the Darjeeling Children's trust and the work they do left a lasting impression on me, so I wanted to see if I could come up with a challenge in order to raise the vital funds needed to keep up the fantastic work they do.

My imagination is probably slightly different to most peoples, I had previously walked on broken glass for charity but then I got thinking about what was the longest time anyone had stood on broken glass – I found out the record was 45 minutes and thought I'd like to give that a go myself! Not satisfied with just one challenge I was also thinking that my feet would be busy but what about my hands – so we came up with a record for the most handcuffs worn within the same period.



“It was a much more difficult “feat” than I ever imagined, about 5 minutes into the challenge I felt my foot slip onto a large shard of glass and I seriously began to worry if I could go on. A few minutes to rebalance my thoughts and I was back on track and feeling positive again. Mind over matter can be extremely powerful. I am still awaiting for my World record to be verified but I managed 1 hour 1 minute and 30 seconds and had a total of 220 pairs of handcuffs

The question is, what do I do for my next challenge?!

We improve the lives of children and young people in Darjeeling through education, training and better living conditions. We put children and young people at the heart of all we do. We work responsively via partnership with local people in Darjeeling to minimise our overheads and maximise our impact.

[Make a donation](#)



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